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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Vietnam

State Department review completed

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20 November 1967

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Information as of 1600
20 November 1967

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HIGHLIGHTS

Fighting has broken out again southwest of Dak To, and US forces took serious losses in one engagement. In the air war, intensive North Vietnamese air defense measures have resulted in the loss of 18 US aircraft in the past five days.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam: Renewed fighting occurred southwest of Dak To. South Vietnamese paratroopers have concluded a three-day sweep northeast of the US base (Paras. 1-4). [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Operation
SHENANDOAH II has ended in northern III Corps (Paras. 9-10).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam: Prime Minister Loc is complaining that conflicting statements and directives from the President and vice president is hampering him (Paras. 1-2). A Quaker relief ship has been denied landing rights at Da Nang (Paras. 3-4).

III. Military Developments in North Vietnam: Eighteen US aircraft have been lost in the past five days to aggressive North Vietnamese air defense measures (Paras. 1-5). [REDACTED]

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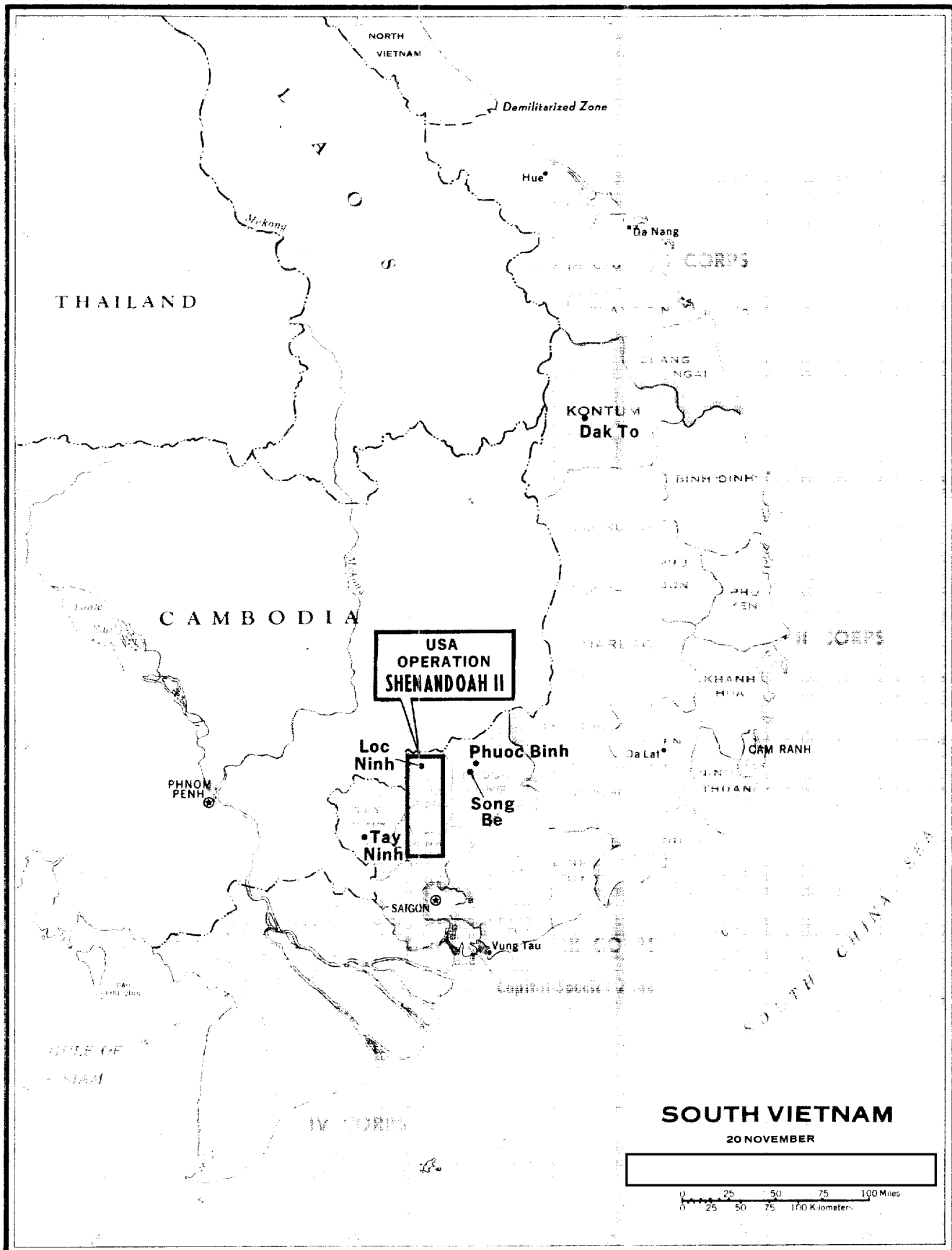
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IV. Other Communist Military Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments: There is nothing of significance to report.

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Renewed fighting in the hills several miles southwest of Dak To on 19-20 November has been described as the most vicious in the two-and-one-half-week-old highlands campaign.

2. The largest of several new engagements in the area began on 19 November when two company-size US reconnaissance patrols ran into elements of the North Vietnamese 174th Regiment in well-prepared positions and bunkers. A third US company joined the fight and was immediately hit by another enemy force. Preliminary casualty reports, based on incomplete information, show heavy American losses of 40 killed, 42 wounded, and another 32 missing. There is no word yet on enemy casualties.

3. Also on 19 November, two battalions of South Vietnamese paratroopers engaged an enemy force northeast of Dak To. The enemy was identified as a subordinate of the North Vietnamese 24th Division which has been involved in the recent fighting north of Dak To. This engagement culminated a three-day drive along three miles of ridge line and accounted for 51 enemy soldiers killed. Our losses were 34 killed and 161 wounded.

4. Since the current campaign began in southwestern Kontum Province on 3 November, US forces have killed 868 enemy soldiers and captured nearly 150 weapons. American losses for the 18-day period now stand at 197 killed, 750 wounded, and 41 missing. The South Vietnamese say they have killed some 350 Communists, raising the overall number of enemy dead in the immediate Dak To area to more than 1,200.

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Operation SHENANDOAH II Ends

9. The 51-day multibattalion search-and-destroy operation, SHENANDOAH II, ended on 19 November. The operation accounted for 956 enemy soldiers killed. The sweep began in north-central Binh Duong Province some 38 miles north of Saigon and was extended to include all of Binh Long Province when Communist forces mounted a series of large-scale attacks in the Loc Ninh area.

10. American casualties totaled 107 killed and 322 wounded. Enemy losses also included nearly 400,000 pounds of rice and more than 100 weapons.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

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Quaker Relief Ship Barred From South Vietnam

3. The yacht Phoenix, chartered by Quakers to deliver medical supplies to South Vietnam has been denied landing rights at Da Nang and will be escorted to international waters on 22 November. The final decision was made by President Thieu and Vice President Ky after they learned that the Quakers would try to distribute their supplies to the militant Buddhists. The government contends that the Quaker plan violates the conditions under which entry visas were granted to them in Hong Kong--namely that the supplies would be turned over to the Vietnamese Red Cross for internal distribution. The US Embassy believes that the government apparently decided that religious and social groups other than the militant Buddhists would get a share and that this may have influenced the Quakers to attempt to hand the supplies directly to the militants.

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4. An official spokesman told the press on 20 November that, since the medicines on the Phoenix had been brought to South Vietnam only because Hanoi refused to let them be landed in the North, the South Vietnamese Government was denying entry to the Quakers. Since this bare-bones explanation will probably leave the government open to criticism, the embassy is urging that another statement be issued which will present the government's action in a better light.

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III. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTH VIETNAM

1. Three more US aircraft were shot down by North Vietnamese air defense units on 20 November. This means that 18 US planes have been lost in the past five days. The heavy losses occurred in a period of intensive air operations which began on 16 November against targets in the Hanoi/Haiphong area. In the preceding week, inclement weather had held air activity and losses to a minimum.

2. Communist air defense successes in recent days appear to have been the result of a more vigorous application of normal tactics, rather than any new weapons or procedures.

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particular high level of surface-to-air missile (SAM) and antiaircraft artillery (AAA) fire. SAMs accounted for 10 of the 18 US losses, while conventional gun fire was responsible for two.

3. The success on the part of the SAMs, which customarily have been far less effective than AAA, is probably attributable to the great number of missiles fired.

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4. North Vietnam's MIG fighters accounted for two, probably four, American planes, a significant accomplishment in view of the limited number of fighters remaining in country.

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The group of fighters which has attacked US strike groups with such success during the past five days probably consists of about eight aircraft, four of which may be MIG-21s.

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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTSV. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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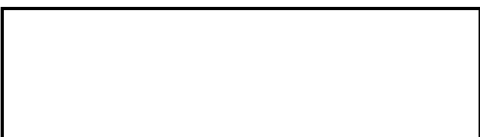
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